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Question of Palestine

The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 12 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the following documents of the tenth extraordinary session of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Doha on 10 December 2001:

1. Text of the statement of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, Chairman of the Ninth Islamic Summit Conference, at the opening of the session (annex I);

2. Text of the final communiqué (annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 41, 42 and 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annexes to the letter dated 12 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Annex I

[Original: Arabic]

Statement by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, at the opening of the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

Doha, 25 Ramadan 1422, corresponding to 10 December 2001

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise be to God, and may He bless the Prophet, his family and his followers and grant them salvation.

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Dear Brothers,

I welcome you to Doha and I pray to Almighty God to inspire us with the wisdom and sound judgement that will enable this meeting, which is set against grave and tragic conditions for the Palestinians, to adopt tangible decisions that may help them regain their inalienable national rights.

We wish indeed that His Excellency President Yasser Arafat could have joined us in this meeting to give us a clear picture of the grave developments in the occupied Palestinian territories and the constant Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. However, he is unable to attend because of circumstances well known to us all, stemming from Israel's relentless measures and practices. Yet despite this, he is present with us in his thoughts and his enlightened participation, which impart to his people's unremitting struggle perseverance and steadfastness.

In fact, as I was contemplating the points of this speech, I went over the evolution of the peace process during the last year or more and it became perfectly clear to me that from the outset the fate, the outstanding character and indeed the distinction of the Ninth Islamic Summit resided in the fact that it coincided with the Al-Aqsa intifadah. It is as if something was telling the leaders and peoples of the Muslim world: never forget, not even for an instant, that your overriding cause relates to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine and the State of Palestine.

Thus we all agree that this meeting must not be a forum for making speeches. It is our duty to make it a genuine test of our collective will and our historic responsibility regarding the Palestinian issue, in word and in deed alike.

The situation, as we know, is dangerous for the Palestinians and extremely dangerous for the world, especially the Arab and Islamic world. Indeed, what is left after all that has been done by the occupying forces: committing mass killings, imposing blockades and isolation, starving the population, bulldozing crops, destroying the infrastructure, violating what is most sacred, denying access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayer and levelling open and undisguised threats against the symbols of Palestinian authority?

Dear Brothers,

There is no question that we are at a crossroads, and by "we" I do not mean Arabs and Muslims only, but the international community as a whole. Either we strengthen our determination and our trust in international legitimacy, something that is no longer easy to achieve or to accept in the context of the flagrant violations of justice and right that we witness daily and the highly suspect absence and reluctance of the mechanisms of that legitimacy; or, God forbid, we face the turn in the road that looms on the horizon, which means shirking all those international commitments and covenants and unleashing a spiral of violence and bloodshed. All will then suffer the consequences and bear the responsibility for the dangers inherent in that situation, which will not only blow away Palestinians and Israelis alike, but may well set ablaze the extremely sensitive Middle East region.

It is therefore both reasonable and wise to opt for the first path, for though difficult, it is the safer and more secure. It depends on two basic conditions:

The first condition, which I consider essential, beneficial and easy to realize, is that those who are on intimate terms with Israel and at the same time have vital interests in the Middle East should shoulder their responsibilities.

They must become convinced that the Palestinian people must inevitably obtain all their internationally recognized rights. They must also become convinced that resisting an occupying force is legitimate self-defence.

More than at any time in the past, it is essential today that the international community play the desired role in putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and arriving at a comprehensive, lasting settlement of the dispute in the Middle East based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. This implies enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right of self-determination and establishing an independent State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. This, in my estimation, is the safety valve for peace and stability and for defusing tension in the region. It means forcing Israel to comply with international law; inducing it to desist from its aggressive policies; ending its occupation of Arab lands; dismantling Israeli settlements; recognizing the right of refugees to return to their homes; putting an end to attempts to judaize East Jerusalem and change its architectural, cultural and demographic features, as required by international instruments, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention (1949); ending its occupation of the Syrian Golan; and completing the full and genuine withdrawal of its forces from Lebanese territory in accordance with the United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242, 328 and 425.

The second condition, my Brothers, relates to our role as leaders and peoples in dealing with this complex situation.

Our meeting today has a historic responsibility to start its work from where our previous efforts to support legitimate Palestinian rights left off, adopting a firm and resolute stand on the provision of international protection for the Palestinian people; establishing, in cooperation with the international community, specific mechanisms to halt the continuous Israeli attacks; ensuring that a definitive solution is reached in the occupied territories by committing Israel to serious measures; and reaffirming that peace can be achieved only through the implementation of the relevant accords, the return of lands and respect for legitimate rights.

In this context, I propose to you that a committee be set up at the ministerial level to undertake the task of following up this pressing issue on an urgent basis. The committee would seek to find an Islamic mechanism for action to stop the deterioration of the situation, revive the peace process and resume negotiations on the basis of international legitimacy and the related binding resolutions, in cooperation with the United Nations and all international peace-loving forces that eagerly desire security and stability in the region.

Dear Brothers,

In our belief that peace is an irrevocable strategic choice, we have fully cooperated with all international efforts, including the Mitchell committee recommendations and the Tenet understandings, which we accepted as a comprehensive package. We also expressed our satisfaction with the position declared by President George Bush, who spoke of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a definitive, just and comprehensive resolution of the conflict. We further welcomed the ideas and principles expressed by Secretary of State Colin Powell, who stressed the need to end Israeli occupation of Arab territories and at the same time announced the intention of the United States Administration to start making effective moves to stop the deterioration and revive the peace process.

We must restore the optimism that prevailed after the announcement of those positive American positions, an optimism which, most regrettably, was promptly dissipated by the grave developments that took place in the Palestinian territories. We therefore call upon the United States of America and the international community to take action to put an immediate end to an Israeli policy that can only destroy the last available opportunity to bring peace to our region.

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,
Dear Brothers,

The task before us is momentous, but it can be realized. We must shoulder this responsibility with all the determination, potential and patience we have. Restoring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is our foremost priority. We are confident that our Islamic Ummah is capable of achieving this.

May God grant all of us success in fulfilling our aspirations and bringing about a better future for our peoples and our Ummah. God is with us in our intention and will lead us along the right path.

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

Annex II

[Original: Arabic and English]

Final communiqué of the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on the Grave Situation in the Palestinian Territories

Doha — State of Qatar, 25 Ramadan 1422H (10 December 2001)

At the kind invitation of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the Ninth Islamic Summit Conference, the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was held on 25 Ramadan 1422H (10 December 2001) in Doha, State of Qatar, to consider the grave situation prevailing in Palestine as a result of persistent and escalating Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people.

The Conference expressed its utmost appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and the Government and people of the State of Qatar for their gracious invitation and the opportunity it provided for a thorough and in-depth examination of the grave situation currently prevailing in Palestine.

The Conference listened to the important speech delivered by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, as well as the speech delivered on behalf of President Yasser Arafat. It took cognizance of the Secretary General's report on the serious developments prevailing in Palestine. The Conference unanimously decided to consider the speech of His Highness as an official document of the Conference.

The Conference elected its Bureau as follows:

– State of Qatar	Chairman
– Islamic Republic of Pakistan]	
– Republic of Senegal]	Vice-Chairmen
– State of Palestine]	
– Republic of Mali	Rapporteur

After exhaustive discussions and deliberations between Their Excellencies the Ministers and the heads of delegations, the Extraordinary Session of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States on the grave situation prevailing in Palestine and the entire region, reached the following decisions:

- The Conference reiterates its commitment to all the previous resolutions adopted by the Islamic conferences and meetings relevant to the question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

- The Conference commends and takes pride in the Palestinian people's steadfastness and heroic Intifadah against the aggression of the Israeli occupation forces in order to achieve its legitimate rights. It affirms its continued political, material and moral support and assistance to counter the occupation, and reaffirms that the Israeli occupation is indeed the prime cause behind the deterioration and gravity of the situation in the region.

- The Conference condemns the Israeli occupation and bombardment of cities, villages, camps and centres of the Palestinian National Authority, and Israel's use of F-16 Fighter Planes and U.S. made Apache helicopter gun ships. The Conference holds Israel fully responsible for its aggression and consequences, considering it a blatant violation of the Palestinian human rights and a clear transgression of all covenants, conventions and International Law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Furthermore, the Conference strongly condemns Israel's use of force in all forms, and warns it against the consequences of blackmailing and persistence in these danger-laden policies against the Palestinian people, their national institutions and legitimate elected leadership. It warns against Israel's aborted and rejected attempts to sabotage Palestinian national unity and considers that the totality of the dangerous Israeli policies aims at disrupting security and stability in the entire region. The Conference calls on all the Palestinian people to rally around its National Authority under the leadership of President Yasser Arafat.

- The Conference requests the UN Security Council, in its capacity as the international body chiefly responsible for the maintenance and

restoration of international security and peace, to shoulder its responsibilities in ensuring an immediate end to the Israeli aggression. It invites the Security Council to expeditiously dispatch international observers to ensure the necessary international protection for the Palestinian people and to oversee the institution and maintenance of security in conformity with the international resolutions, agreements and recommendations already agreed in the framework of the Peace-Process.

- The Conference calls on the United States of America to actuate the positive elements contained in its vision on solving the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which rests on the UN Security Council resolutions 232 and 348 that provide for ending the Israeli occupation and halting the settlements in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, and the establishment of independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. It also calls on the U.S. Administration to actually implement the provisions of the aforementioned vision in accordance with specific mechanism and timetable whereby deeds would be fully synchronized with words.

- The Conference calls upon the international community, the United Nations and particularly the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the European Union, to intervene immediately to put an end to the Israeli aggression and prevent the Israeli Government from persisting with its aggressive designs aimed at undermining the Palestinian National Authority, spreading chaos and disorder and reoccupying the already liberated Palestinian territories in order to abort the agreements and sabotage the very foundations of the peace process.

- The Conference rejects establishing any link between terrorism and the right of the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian peoples, to resist Israeli aggression and occupation, considered as a legitimate right ensured by international laws and conventions. It condemns the contention that the Israeli aggression is in self-defence and rejects the policies of unlimited support extended to Israel. The Conference condemns State terrorism practised by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

- The Conference reiterates that the current policies of the Israeli Government threaten and jeopardize the Middle East peace process.

- The Conference recommends to the Governments of the OIC member States and the Islamic organizations, institutions and peoples to extend multifaceted assistance to the Palestinian National Authority in such a way as to enable it to fulfil its urgent obligations.

- The Conference requests the Chairman of the Summit to constitute a ministerial level Committee composed of: State of Qatar as Chairman, and Republic of Mali, Malaysia, Syrian Arab Republic, Kingdom of Morocco, Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Senegal as well as the OIC Secretary General as members, with a view to carry out urgent contacts with the Permanent Member States of the UN Security Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Presidency of the European Union and the Vatican. The objectives of this Committee will be to explain the plight and suffering of the Palestinian people and the impact of the Israeli aggression on the situation in the region. The Committee would set up an Islamic working mechanism aimed at projecting the unity of the Islamic position and determination to mobilize every possible support and assistance to this just cause in accordance with the following basis:

  1. Establishing the independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

  2. Rejecting the judaization of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

  3. Reaffirming the Palestinian refugees' right to repatriation in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

  4. Putting an immediate end to the Israeli aggression and the halt of the schemes that seek to undermine the Palestinian Authority, and the non-imposition of any restrictions on the movements of the officials and individuals of the Palestinian National Authority or harassing them, and to consider any such pursuits as terrorism, the

consequences and reactions of which Israel shall be held solely responsible.

5. Lifting the blockade and the closure imposed on the Palestinian people, as well as an immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the areas under the Palestinian Authority which Israel had reoccupied, and also the withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories to the 4th of June 1967 line, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the Golan, as well as the withdrawal from the remaining parts of Southern Lebanon.

6. Putting an end to the crimes of political and other assassinations, collective sanctions and the oppressive practices and measures against the Palestinian people, and to consider them as a blatant violation of the principles of international law.

7. Halting and removing the Israeli settlements which are considered as a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people to their land and a violation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy which view these settlements as illegal with no validity or obligations whatsoever in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

8. Lifting immediately the sieges and blockades imposed on all Palestinian areas, including the city of Al-Quds.

9. Releasing the Palestinian and Arab detainees from the Israeli prisons.

10. Dispatching international observers to protect the Palestinian people against the Israeli brutal aggression and to supervise the implementation of any agreement reached.

11. Releasing the funds owned by the Palestinian people and its National Authority which have been impounded by the Israeli occupation authorities and immediately removing all restrictions imposed on the movement of Palestinian individuals and goods.

12. Requesting the international community to seek the resumption of the peace process in accordance with the foundations on which they were based and at the point where they had stopped, and establishing a specific mechanism and timetable for the implementation of the reports, the agreements and the understandings reached by the Palestinian and the Israeli sides.

13. Rejecting the lists that characterize some Islamic countries, the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance movements as terrorists. The Conference considers that such lists have no legal effect and obstructs the efforts exerted to combat international terrorism.